

liberty—a thing as yet unheard of in Virginia. A petition was presented by the Baptists asking that Baptist ministers be allowed to preach to Baptist soldiers. The Convention passed a resolution granting their request. Jefferson's vote for the resolution was his first act in a movement directed by himself which led to the disestablishment of the church in Virginia, and to a general separation of Church and State in America.

After a few days' attendance upon the Convention, Jefferson sought his beloved Monticello, the scene of so much joy and sorrow in his life. This time sorrow darkened his stay. His second child, Jane, died in September. A letter written by him about this time to John Randolph, a kinsman whose interests had caused him to leave America at the outbreak of hostilities and take up his residence in England, reflects in clear light Jefferson's views upon the troublous questions of the hour. "I would rather be in dependence on Great Britain, properly limited," he writes in this letter, "than on any nation on earth, or than on no nation. But I am one of those, too, who rather than submit to the rights of legislating for us assumed by the British Parliament, would lend my hand to sink the whole island." This could mean but one thing—separation.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Jefferson returned to Philadelphia in September to find that the temper of Congress accorded with his own. The king had spurned the petition of the Americans, had not deigned even to listen to it, and was making active military preparations for the coercion of the colonists. The Americans, on the other hand, were taxing all their resources in their preparation for resistance. Philadelphia, where the companies were drilling twice a day, was more like a camp than a peaceful Quaker town. News came from the North that Boston was evacuated and Ticonderoga captured; from the South, that Norfolk, the largest city of Virginia, was burned by the British. Congress sat with closed doors but its members were not deaf to the alarming state